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SUBJECT: JERUSALEM MEDIA REACTION (11/14): ARAB RELUCTANCE TO PLAY
GREATER ROLE IN PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI PEACE PROCESS

Main Stories:

All front pages run statements by Israeli Foreign Minister Livni rejecting "extensive" engagement by president-elect Obama in the Middle East peace process. The papers cite Reuters in quoting Livni during a November 13 meeting with Jewish-Americans in New York, where she also objected to the return of, "even one Palestinian refugee." Livni is further quoted telling the audience, "please don't interfere, this is a bilateral process. Don't try to bridge gaps between us, and don't propose new ideas." In related news, the front pages of Al Ayyam and Al Hayat Al Jadida report that President Bush and Saudi King Abdullah met on the margins of the UN sponsored interfaith conference and discussed the peace process and international financial crisis.

Al Hayat Al Jadida front pages statements by former Israeli minister Yussi Baylin asking Israel on November 13 to reach a settlement with Palestinians on the West Bank only, excluding Hamas and the Gaza Strip. The front page also runs statements by the Jordanian Foreign Minister urging the incoming U.S. administration to actively engage in the Middle East peace process.

The three dailies lead with news of the shutdown of power in Gaza due to fuel shortages, showing pictures of children reading by the light of candles and kerosene lamps. Al Quds notes that hospitals, basic services and the water supply are threatened by the shutdown. Al Quds and Al Ayyam report that UNRWA Commissioner General Abu Zayd told Reuters on November 13 that she is concerned over Israel's policy to only allow humanitarian assistance into the Strip, adding that school supplies will be excluded from future UNRWA deliveries to Gaza.

Al Quds' front page notes warnings by UN Peace Envoy Richard Myron

and Quartet Representative Tony Blair of a collapse of the Gaza truce between Hamas and Israel. Blair called for the creation of conditions that facilitate Palestinian unity and prevent the firing of rockets into Israel, in order to deny Israel a "pretext" for closing Gaza crossings, Al Quds continued.

The three papers front page statements by Palestinian Authority Premier Fayyad, made in Paris on November 13. Fayyad is quoted saying that Israel is endangering the peace process with its continued settlement activity. Fayyad called for a halt to settlement activity in the Palestinian Territories, including Jerusalem, in order to begin to rebuild the credibility of the peace process, the papers report.

Al Quds reveals on its front page the existence of an internal document issued by the Hamas polit bureau that questions the credibility of Egyptian efforts towards reuniting Palestinians. The document also questions Fatah's motives for joining in the Cairo dialogue and accuses Fatah of seeking to end Hamas control of the Gaza Strip and launch new elections "tailored" to Fatah's needs. In related news, Al Ayyam's front page quotes PLO Executive Committee member Yasir Abid Rabbo confirming on November 13 that Palestinian internal dialogue remains under the sponsorship of Egypt and will not be transferred to the Arab League.

On an inside page, Al Hayat Al Jadida reports that USAID has signed an agreement to support basic education in the Palestinian Territories. The agreement was signed in Ramallah on November 13, in the presence of USAID Director Sumka and Palestinian officials, under the auspices of the Palestinian Authority Minister of

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Education.

BLOCK QUOTES:

1) Mohamad Yaghy opines in Al Ayyam under the title, "Obama is not a replacement for Arab and Palestinian will" (11/14): "How can [peace] negotiations succeed when Hamas rejects them outright?... the problem isn't in the appointment of the Jewish Rahm [to White House Chief of Staff] since he won't be the one drafting U.S. foreign policy... the problem is and will remain Arab refusal to take on their role [in the peace process] and their preference to wait and see what comes from the other side of the ocean."

2) Al Quds editorial is titled, "No alternative to dialogue" (11/14): "There is no alternative for the two parties [Fatah and Hamas] but to pursue dialogue ... any other alternative, such as those advanced by non-Palestinian agendas, will not lead to anything, but more suffering and catastrophe... The Palestinian people are optimistic about the success of a meeting among Palestinian factions in general, and between Fatah and Hamas in particular, because they believe that the Palestinian cause and higher interests will trump all differences."

Wallles